



# Beleidsplan Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk

Version 22 May 2023

**Klimaat  
Helpdesk**

**Antwoorden van  
wetenschappers op  
al je vragen over  
klimaatverandering**

## 1. Introduction and competencies<sup>1</sup>

Many citizens, organizations, institutions, and businesses are seeking reliable scientific information on the topic of climate change and related actions. School-teachers and pupils, activists in favor or against broader measures, municipalities, farming cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, or energy cooperatives are just a few examples. Providing reliable information and evidence-based answers on these questions requires expert-input. The present vacuum creates opportunities for communication of information that does not reflect scientific consensus, which hinders adequate policy-making and climate action. KlimaatHelpdesk is a public-outreach initiative, designed, supported and managed by scientists, that provides an easy-to-access platform for the general public to ask their questions. These questions are answered by a network of active experts with prominent academic profiles. The quality of these answers is guaranteed by a board of editors supervising the peer-review process of answers to the questions. Peer-review is commonly accepted as the standard method of curating reliability of scientific facts. As such, KlimaatHelpdesk plays an active role in disseminating science, decreases the distance between science and society, and thereby contributes to a broad public knowledge base for the challenges ahead.

There are several specialized organizations in the Netherlands working on the impacts of climate change and present their solutions to decision making bodies. The specialization of these organizations and the practical confines of their relation to policy-making, however, does not allow each them to openly and independently reflect on the broad range of questions that are presently facing the citizens in this regard: from legal to engineering questions, and from psychological to financial inquiries.

To fill in this void, and in response to public outcry for evidence-based policy-making for tackling climate change and the best available science, a group of concerned scientists organized a support letter for the climate strike in 2019. This letter, which was signed by 2500 scientists in the Netherlands, also contained a pledge to answer the public's question with facts and latest evidence. KlimaatHelpdesk is the actualization of this promise, initiated by a subgroup of the organizers of that support letter.

The added value of KlimaatHelpdesk primarily stems from 1) covering a broad range of topics with a large network of experts 2) direct contact with active and knowledgeable researchers, and 3) streamlined and high-quality moderation of the answers based on scholarly standards of scientific integrity and objectivity. 4) providing high-level scientific findings in a simple language that is accessible for the general public.

### Scope of this document

This document first lays out what we stand for by describing our mission, vision and goals. We will then put forward our three-year strategy (2021-2024). We conclude by describing the means we foresee to achieve this strategy, organizationally and financially.

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<sup>1</sup> The beleidsplan is formulated in English, as many of the volunteers of the KlimaatHelpdesk are English-speaking

## 2. Our foundations and strategy

### Mission

To provide scientifically well-founded answers to questions from the civil society related to climate change and its impacts, and responses.

### Vision

Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk plays a notable part in providing scientific information to the public in the Netherlands and Europe, and making this information accessible, by inviting and archiving questions related to climate change and its societal impacts and getting them answered by the recognized scientific experts on each topic.

### Goals

Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk mission and vision translate into five goals:

1. To develop and maintain the public online platform: [www.klimaathelpdesk.org](http://www.klimaathelpdesk.org)
2. To relay incoming questions to experts and to oversee adhering to scientific norms in the answering process.
3. Outreach: to promote the platform, invite questions, and maintain the platform reputation as independent scientific knowledge-base among users and experts
4. All the operational and creative activities that can facilitate the above-mentioned goals

To execute on these goals, Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk can decide to support initiatives contributing to these goals by supporting third persons or organizations through co-financing or advice.

Material and monetary rewards for the Stichting's board members are explicitly excluded from the goals.

In all cases, the Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk will safeguard its independency regarding processing the incoming questions from its financial sponsors and will curate the scientific answers on its platform solely based on academic norms.

## Three year strategy (2021- 2024)

As a new organization, Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk's three-year strategy is foremost geared towards building a solid foundation for our operations in the future. Our strategy consists of four pillars:

I. Getting the **basics right**

- Ensuring appropriate financial and human resources. In particular, managing the publishing process
- Broaden and deepen relationships with the scientific experts
- Establishing board meeting cadence and division of tasks
- Maintaining reliable functioning of the website: accessibility, visualization and navigation
- Building out (financial) reporting

II. Doing the **right things**

- Preparing a fundraising plan to deliver on our goals
- Setting up a high-profile external advisory board in line with the statutory aims

Evaluating success and building future roadmap of activities

III. Making people **aware**

- Promoting our platform across all levels of society
- Participating in outreach activities via partnerships
- Establishing ourselves as a reliable point of reference

IV. Growing our **impact**

- Partnering with other organizations
- Defining a clear role for KlimaatHelpdesk in training young scientists for engaging in science communication
- Engaging in education programs

To a large extent our execution timeline follows the order of the pillars.

In the first year, next to executing our core activities, we mainly focus on finding new partners for outreach and new supporting organizations for financial sustainability of the Stichting.

In the second year, we aim to build out our project portfolio and to increase awareness within the academic community and to expand our reach to outside the Netherlands.

In the third year, we seek to leverage our learnings from the first two years to establish a more standardized project roadmap. We will then engage with educational organizations to provide our services in their curriculum or development thereof.

The execution of our strategy will be in balance with our financial resources. Upon establishment, KlimaatHelpdesk activities are financed by donations from its sponsors, summing up to a total of roughly 30.000 Euros. During the first year, we expect to secure extra funding via grant applications and extra external funding.

### 3. External activities

To reach out to a wider public and to increase its efficacy in executing its mission, Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk will support consider participation in public engagement programs, such as fairs and museum exhibitions, and national conferences and relevant gatherings.

Other outreach activities such as organizing workshops, public lectures, and online webinars, and alike will be considered as legitimate activities for expanding the reach of the platform to a wider audience.

## 4. Organization

Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk currently has no regular employees. It relies on volunteers as well as people carrying out ad hoc assignments. When the foundation's income and number of activities increases, Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk aims at hiring employees or contractors to deal with administrative tasks, communications, team management, IT, marketing, finance, legal support, insurances, as well as onboarding members and organizations.

The board of Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk is responsible for its activities and strategy. The current setup of the board is as follows:

- Dr. Joeri Reinders (Co-chair)
- Dr. Martina Huber (Co-chair)
- Dr. Joseline Houwman (Secretary)
- Dr. Margot Cramwinckel (Treasurer)

For successful execution of its activities, the board will seek advice from an independent advisory council, set up at the request of the board in informal agreement with the current sponsors.

### Daily operations

Day-to-day operations of the KlimaatHelpdesk involve:

- Ensuring maximum delivery time for answers
- Ensuring the site is live
- Relevance check and indexing of incoming questions before they become visible
- Team management of volunteers
- Contact with people having questions about the HK itself
- Developing multimedia visualisation and teaching aids for the provided answers
- Promoting website, inviting questions, and maintaining a reliable profile on social media
- Taking care of regular communications archiving for future references

Achieving these depends on a large enough group of volunteers in combination with funding for (part-time) paid support. Permanence in the volunteer group depends on group size and commitment.

## 5. Financial plan

### Income

The foundation's seed income is provided by donations from a number of institutional sources:

- Utrecht Young Academy
- KNAW – De Jonge Akademie
- Amsterdam Young Academy
- Maastricht Young Academy
- Nijmegen Young Academy
- Utrecht University, Pathways to Sustainability strategic program
- Utrecht University, Public engagement program of the Open Science Platform
- Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Science
- NESSC

Besides this initial source, Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk seeks other sources of income. Notably:

- In cash and in kind support by interested parties, as long as these are not in conflict with the statutory aims of the KlimaatHelpdesk.
- European, national and other subsidies
- Gifts and donations

### Expenses

In the first year, Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk will use its currently secured donations to pay for the salaries of one community coordinator, setting up the advisory board, and the maintenance of the website.

In the future, expenses might include other projects and include salary cost of personnel (please note that board members are not eligible for income).

As non-profit organisation, all income will be used for activities that contribute to the statutory aims. This may require growing monetary buffers that ensures long-term continuity.

Stichting KlimaatHelpdesk

KVKnummer: 83377646  
ANBI: 862850848

Bank: Triodos  
IBAN: NL84TRIO0320314448